# Executive Human Capital Leaders in Education Certification Program
## *Body of Knowledge*

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## INTRODUCTION

# Introduction

The Human Capital Leaders in Education (HCLE) standards outline the competencies that leaders in PK-12 education and related organizations need to strategically manage human capital (HC) processes at the organization, department, or team level. The Executive Human Capital Leader in Education (eHCLE) certification program is rooted in the HCLE standards and reflects mastery of the eHCLE body of knowledge (BoK).

As an experienced HC leader, earning eHCLE certification will help you expand your impact on your organization, the students you serve, and the field at large. This document describes the eHCLE body of knowledge, as well as requirements and processes for certification.

For more information, visit HCLeader.org.

# eHCLE Certification

To earn eHCLE certification, individuals participate in a 10-month, cohort-based, professional development program. Program participants are selected through an application process.

### Program Requirements
Applicants must meet these requirements to be considered for the eHCLE program:
- Has a current, unexpired Professional Human Capital Leader (pHCLE) certification
- Has a current AASPA membership
- Experience:
    - A minimum of seven years in building, district, and/or organization leadership positions that involve leading a project, program, department, and/or staff
    - Demonstrated success impacting systems-wide change

### Certification
Once accepted into the program, participants will:
- Attend virtual meetings with their cohort
- Complete an approved independent project aligned with the eHCLE standards and project quality rubric
- Present their project, either virtually or at AASPA's Human Capital Leadership Summit
- Provide high-quality feedback on their peers' projects

Upon completing the requirements for eHCLE certification, participants will receive a certificate in the mail, along with recommendations for displaying their credentials as part of their professional email signature.

## eHCLE Standards

In 2021, AASPA, Experience Management Institute, and a national committee of PK-12 HC leaders collaborated to develop the eHCLE standards, which were finalized the following year and updated in 2025. The standards define the core HC knowledge domains along with the skills needed to lead HC functions in education organizations:



## HCLE domains

The HCLE standards are organized across seven domains. The three content domains are **Talent Acquisition**, **Talent Development**, and **Total Rewards**. The four cross-cutting domains, which strengthen and support the content domains, are **Strategy**, **Risk Management**, **Process Management**, and **Experience Management**. Each domain is described in greater detail in the Body of Knowledge section below.

Additionally, three overarching principles support the eHCLE domains and define the actions and dispositions of effective leaders. The first is ethical leadership, which includes responsible decision-making, modeling strong professional conduct, and establishing fair policies and practices that serve all stakeholders with integrity and consistency. The second centers on honoring individual differences and removing barriers that limit full participation, ensuring that every employee has meaningful access to opportunities and a voice in the organization. The final principle is a learning mindset, demonstrated through a commitment to continuous improvement, thoughtful use of data, and application of research-based practices.

The eHCLE content domains, cross-cutting domains, and guiding principles together represent the knowledge and skills that human capital leaders need today. When applied effectively, these practices enhance an organization's ability to attract and retain top talent and contribute to a positive, productive workplace culture.

## HCLE STANDARDS

# Body of Knowledge

This body of knowledge is organized around the seven HCLE domains. Each domain is broken down into standards that outline what executive-level human capital leaders should be able to do. The standards serve as the primary driver of learning in the eHCLE certification program in two ways. First, they inform the program curriculum, including synchronous learning as well as homework assignments. Second, every eHCLE certification program participant chooses a subset of content domain standards to shape the design of their independent project. Each standard is further broken down into learning objectives to help eHCLE candidates understand what they are expected to know and be able to do to earn their certification.

## Bloom's Taxonomy

Each eHCLE learning objective is tagged with a level of cognition, as defined by the revised Bloom's Taxonomy (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001). The most complex level of thinking captured by a set of objectives is listed next to the standard that corresponds with those objectives.

Below are brief descriptions of the levels of the revised Bloom's Taxonomy.[1]
1. **Remember:** Recognize or recall facts and information.
2. **Understand:** Interpret, summarize, organize, or clarify information.
3. **Apply:** Carry out a task or use acquired knowledge in a new context.
4. **Analyze:** Examine data or evidence, deconstruct information, and make inferences.
5. **Evaluate:** Critique, reflect, or make judgments based on evidence or criteria.
6. **Create:** Construct a new product, system, or solution by reorganizing information in a new way.

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[1]Adapted from: Anderson, L.W. & Krathwohl, D.R. (2001). *A taxonomy for learning, teaching, and assessing:* A revision of Bloom's Taxonomy of educational objectives. New York: Pearson

# Talent Acquisition

*The process of identifying talent needs and finding, attracting, and hiring qualified candidates to satisfy those needs.*

## Planning and Preparation

*Practices that enable organizations to identify and address talent needs.*

**PP.1: Forecast talent needs to generate a workforce plan. (Analyze)**
- Use the organization's strategic priorities and external market trends to forecast talent needs in the short and long term. *(Analyze)*
- Compare current workforce data to talent needs and identify gaps. *(Analyze)*
- Identify internal and external forces impacting talent availability. *(Analyze)*
- Develop a workforce plan to address identified gaps. *(Apply)*

**PP.2: Incorporate the employee value proposition (EVP) into the organization's brand. (Apply)**
- Define the organization's EVP. *(Apply)*
- Embed the organization's EVP consistently across communication channels. *(Apply)*

**PP.3: Develop a position control process. (Evaluate)**
- Align organizational structure and staffing to student counts, demographics, and organizational priorities. *(Evaluate)*
- Create a job hierarchy in which position titles are aligned with organizational structure and responsibilities. *(Apply)*
- Define clear procedures for creating, modifying, and eliminating positions based on the organization's priorities and budget. *(Evaluate)*

**PP.4: Analyze the distribution of effective educators to ensure fair access for students. (Analyze)**
- Use student and educator data to identify access gaps. *(Analyze)*
- Implement strategies to improve access to effective educators. *(Apply)*

## Recruitment

*Uncovering sources of high-potential candidates and identifying targeted strategies to convince qualified individuals to apply to your organization.*

**R.1: Market the organization to potential hires by cultivating a positive employer brand. (Analyze)**

- Use data and employee perspectives to identify the organization's competitive advantages. *(Analyze)*
- Craft messaging that uses the employee value proposition (EVP) to promote the organization to prospective applicants. *(Apply)*
- Curate a digital presence that attracts potential candidates to the organization. *(Apply)*
- Develop brand ambassadors to promote the organization. *(Apply)*

**R.2: Develop a recruitment strategy to source and attract qualified applicants. (Analyze)**

- Use the organization's vacancy data, turnover data, and strategic priorities to create a recruitment strategy. *(Analyze)*
- Identify sources of high-performing employees using data. *(Analyze)*
- Engage in recruitment year-round, leveraging short-term, long-term, internal, and external strategies. *(Apply)*

**R.3: Build pipelines to develop exceptional candidates. (Analyze)**

- Establish data-driven systems to build and track talent pipelines. *(Apply)*
- Use data, external funding sources, and budgets to identify fiscally responsible growth opportunities for employees. *(Analyze)*
- Connect professional development to succession planning and pipeline building. *(Apply)*

**R.4: Evaluate recruitment outcomes to inform talent acquisition strategy. (Evaluate)**

- Assess the effectiveness of the organization's talent acquisition strategy. *(Analyze)*
- Adjust the organization's talent acquisition strategy based on analyses of its effectiveness. *(Evaluate)*

## Hiring

*Assessing candidate qualifications to identify and extend a job offer to the most suitable candidate for an open position.*

**H.1: Design a selection process to assess candidates effectively and efficiently. (Apply)**
- Design a selection process that aligns with job functions, organizational values, and legal requirements. *(Apply)*
- Identify and reduce inefficiencies in the selection process. *(Apply)*

**H.2: Mitigate bias in the selection process. (Analyze)**
- Identify areas in the selection process that are susceptible to subjectivity and bias. *(Analyze)*
- Reduce bias in the selection process. *(Apply)*

**H.3: Refine candidate experience. (Analyze)**
- Analyze candidate experience data. *(Analyze)*
- Remove barriers to retain candidates throughout the selection process. *(Apply)*
- Improve selection processes based on data findings. *(Apply)*

# Talent Development

*Actions that foster employee learning and growth.*

## Orientation and Onboarding

*Supporting employees throughout transitions into or within the organization.*

**O.1: Design processes that account for differences in role, experience, and readiness. (Apply)**
- Create employee-centric pre-boarding, orientation, and onboarding programs. *(Apply)*
- Develop resources, documentation, and social supports for new employees, substitute teachers, and contractors. *(Apply)*
- Coordinate the onboarding process to accelerate new hires' integration into their role and the organization. *(Apply)*

**O.2: Prepare mentors/coaches and supervisors to support new employees. (Apply)**
- Create a process for selecting and assigning mentors/coaches for new hires. *(Apply)*
- Provide training and support for mentors/coaches and supervisors in alignment with onboarding goals and best practices. *(Apply)*

## Performance Management

*Maintaining or improving job performance through ongoing supervisor and employee interactions.*

**P.1: Implement performance management systems for all employees. (Apply)**
- Enact performance management systems that align with organizational priorities, employee needs, and legal requirements. *(Apply)*
- Ensure every employee regularly receives meaningful performance feedback. *(Apply)*

**P.2: Optimize the quality and fairness of evaluation and support systems. (Analyze)**
- Collect and analyze metrics to assess evaluation and support systems. *(Analyze)*
- Develop evaluator training and supports to minimize subjectivity and maximize reliability. *(Apply)*
- Adopt strategies to mitigate bias in performance management. *(Apply)*

**P.3: Develop workplace policies. (Apply)**
- Create workplace policies that promote fairness and consistency. *(Apply)*
- Establish strategies to educate employees on workplace policies. *(Apply)*
- Monitor adherence to workplace policies. *(Apply)*

**P.4: Create transparent support systems for all employees. (Analyze)**
- Collect and analyze data to understand employees' support needs. *(Analyze)*
- Establish systems for helping employees improve. *(Apply)*
- Create a fair and ethical process to address discipline issues. *(Apply)*

## Training & Development

*Learning activities that support the acquisition of new skills, knowledge, and abilities.*

**TD.1: Identify training and development needs. (Analyze)**
- Assess training and development needs of employees. *(Analyze)*
- Translate organizational priorities into training and development needs. *(Analyze)*
- Ensure training and development programs reflect best practices in adult learning. *(Apply)*

**TD.2: Provide professional development to drive improvements for employees and students. (Apply)**
- Leverage the organization's professional development infrastructure, such as a learning management system, policies and procedures, and communication. *(Apply)*
- Ensure access to learning opportunities. *(Apply)*

**TD.3: Evaluate training and development programs. (Evaluate)**
- Assess the impact of training and development programs on employee groups and the organization. *(Analyze)*
- Analyze participation in training and development programs to identify gaps in access. *(Analyze)*
- Improve the quality of training and development programs. *(Evaluate)*

# Total Rewards

*All the financial and experiential incentives, rewards, and benefits provided to employees as part of their employment journey.*

## Compensation & Benefits

*Components of your total rewards program that have a clearly defined value or cost.*

**CB.1: Establish a total rewards strategy. (Evaluate)**
- Design a total rewards program that aligns with organizational priorities, compensation philosophy, and employee needs. *(Apply)*
- Evaluate the affordability of total rewards for employees and the organization. *(Evaluate)*
- Provide discretionary offerings to attract and retain talent. *(Apply)*

**CB.2: Monitor the internal and external equity of compensation and benefits. (Evaluate)**
- Examine employee perceptions of compensation and benefits. *(Analyze)*
- Assess the compensation and benefits system for process fidelity and pay equity. *(Analyze)*
- Analyze external markets to ensure the organization offers competitive compensation and benefits. *(Analyze)*
- Make improvements to the compensation and benefits system based on data. *(Evaluate)*

**CB.3: Establish policies and practices to ensure consistent compensation and benefits administration. (Apply)**
- Create mechanisms for issue resolution. *(Apply)*
- Ensure compensation decisions are guided by standardized processes. *(Apply)*
- Develop systems for communicating offerings, processes, and timelines. *(Apply)*

# TOTAL REWARDS

## Work-life Integration
*Supports to help employees achieve success both at and outside of work.*

**W.1: Motivate and engage employees. (Apply)**
- Assess what motivates and engages employees. *(Analyze)*
- Address factors that contribute to employee burnout. *(Apply)*
- Ensure workspaces are safe, accessible, and well-maintained. *(Apply)*

**W.2: Establish programs that support employees. (Apply)**
- Develop staffing models to promote work-life integration. *(Apply)*
- Establish policies and practices to address employee needs. *(Apply)*
- Create procedures for providing workplace accommodations. *(Apply)*

**W.3: Foster an environment that honors employee perspectives and experiences. (Apply)**
- Cultivate a workplace culture where employees feel respected, connected, and able to be their authentic selves. *(Apply)*
- Engage employees in meaningful decision-making and feedback loops. *(Apply)*

## Career Management
*Programs that assist employees with defining and achieving their career goals.*

**CM.1: Establish transparent, data-driven processes for job transitions. (Analyze)**
- Define criteria for transfers, promotions, demotions, and managing exits. *(Apply)*
- Ensure employees understand processes for job transitions. *(Apply)*
- Monitor adherence to job transition processes. *(Apply)*
- Use job transition and exit data to drive organizational improvement. *(Analyze)*

**CM.2: Create career advancement programs aligned to organizational goals. (Analyze)**
- Align career advancement with performance management, succession planning, and other human capital functions. *(Apply)*
- Design development opportunities that prepare employees for career advancement. *(Apply)*
- Ensure employees understand career pathway opportunities. *(Apply)*
- Use workforce data to identify disparities in career progression and address barriers to advancement. *(Analyze)*

## Strategy

*Targeted actions to achieve goals and improve student outcomes in alignment with the mission, vision, and values of the organization.*

**S.1: Ensure human capital priorities are integrated into the organization's strategic plan. (Analyze)**
- Use workforce data and insights to inform long-range organizational goals and priorities. *(Analyze)*
- Advocate for human capital representation in organizational strategy discussions. *(Apply)*
- Influence the development of policy and strategy through a human capital lens. *(Apply)*

**S.2: Establish a comprehensive human capital management system (HCMS) strategy. (Apply)**
- Align human capital goals with the organization's mission, vision, and student outcomes. *(Apply)*
- Design human capital functions that are coherent and integrated with each other. *(Apply)*
- Communicate how human capital functions contribute to organizational outcomes. *(Apply)*
- Develop organizational structures that support strategy implementation. *(Apply)*

**S.3: Adapt human capital strategy to internal and external influences. (Analyze)**
- Apply analysis tools to anticipate and respond to opportunities and risks. *(Analyze)*
- Anticipate future workforce needs and adapt to emerging challenges and opportunities. *(Analyze)*

**S.4: Ensure the effective and equitable stewardship of resources. (Evaluate)**
- Align resource allocation with strategic priorities and workforce data. *(Apply)*
- Identify sustainable funding sources when planning budgets for human capital initiatives. *(Apply)*
- Evaluate return on investment for human capital initiatives and programs. *(Evaluate)*
- Promote fiscal accountability, transparency, and long-term workforce sustainability. *(Apply)*

**S.5: Build participatory and effective decision-making processes. (Apply)**
- Engage a broad range of stakeholders in feedback and decision processes to ensure multiple perspectives are represented. *(Apply)*
- Ensure decision-making processes are transparent, consistent, and grounded in clear criteria. *(Apply)*

# Risk Management

*Proactively identify, assess, and address risks to a project, plan, process, person, or education organization.*

**RM.1: Develop policies and programs that are compliant with laws and regulations. (Analyze)**
- Maintain current knowledge of laws and regulations that affect human capital functions. *(Understand)*
- Develop policies and procedures to mitigate compliance risk. *(Apply)*
- Monitor employment decisions to ensure compliance. *(Analyze)*

**RM.2: Implement data governance, privacy, safety, and human capital policies. (Apply)**
- Develop policies and processes for managing data, technology use, and records retention in compliance with legal guidelines and data security best practices. *(Apply)*
- Establish protocols to prevent workplace injuries and illnesses. *(Apply)*
- Implement policies and reporting mechanisms to address bullying, harassment, and microaggressions. *(Apply)*

**RM.3: Proactively identify potential risks to the organization's human capital management system (HCMS). (Evaluate)**
- Use the results of risk analysis to mitigate risks to the HCMS. *(Evaluate)*
- Develop crisis communication strategies for identified risks. *(Apply)*

**RM.4: Lead the negotiation of agreements and contracts. (Apply)**
- Develop a negotiation strategy. *(Apply)*
- Involve appropriate parties in negotiations. *(Apply)*
- Monitor the implementation of contract terms. *(Apply)*

**RM.5: Foster positive employee relations. (Analyze)**
- Develop and maintain constructive partnerships with employee associations, unions, and representative groups. *(Apply)*
- Anticipate and address issues before they escalate through early intervention and collaborative problem-solving. *(Apply)*
- Establish protocols for addressing employee complaints or grievances. *(Apply)*
- Manage the dispute resolution process. *(Apply)*
- Analyze dispute and grievance data to identify and remediate systemic issues. *(Analyze)*

## Process Management

*Continuously define, measure, analyze, and improve the way work is accomplished to enhance student, employee, and organizational outcomes.*

**PM.1: Manage human capital processes and standard operating procedures (SOPs). (Evaluate)**
- Audit processes and SOPs to identify areas of improvement. *(Analyze)*
- Establish structures that reinforce accountability and fidelity of implementation across the organization. *(Apply)*
- Ensure clarity, consistency, and accessibility of HC processes and SOPs for stakeholders. *(Apply)*
- Apply process improvement methodologies to optimize efficiency and effectiveness. *(Evaluate)*

**PM.2: Monitor progress toward human capital goals. (Analyze)**
- Establish key performance indicators (KPIs). *(Apply)*
- Analyze performance outcomes to determine effectiveness and adjust actions. (Analyze)
- Translate data into clear and compelling narratives to inform and engage stakeholders. *(Apply)*

**PM.3: Use technology solutions to increase process efficiency, effectiveness, and access. (Evaluate)**
- Evaluate technology through the lenses of utility, efficiency, and accessibility. *(Evaluate)*
- Leverage technology platforms to streamline workflows and improve user experience. *(Apply)*
- Monitor technology tools, including artificial intelligence, for bias and other risks. *(Analyze)*

**PM. 4: Champion the change management process.  (Apply)**
- Apply change management principles to design, implement, and evaluate organizational change. *(Apply)*
- Develop and implement change management plans. *(Apply)*
- Build leader and manager capacity to support employees through change. *(Apply)*
- Foster stakeholder buy-in. *(Apply)*

# Experience Management

*Purposefully design, implement, and improve interactions to create a supportive and engaging environment for students, employees, and the community.*

**EM.1: Lead strategies to improve experiences across the customer journey. (Analyze)**
- Analyze feedback to understand the customer experience. *(Analyze)*
- Develop personas to understand the needs and experiences of customer and employee segments. *(Analyze)*
- Coordinate across departments and functions to ensure a seamless customer journey. *(Apply)*

**EM.2: Build the capacity of employees to provide an exceptional customer experience. (Apply)**
- Embed a customer-centered mindset across all human capital systems, policies, and routines. *(Apply)*
- Employ training and supports to help employees improve customer experiences. *(Apply)*
- Empower employees with the authority, resources, and guidance needed to provide an excellent customer experience. *(Apply)*

**EM.3: Design programs and policies that expand access to opportunity and strengthen the employee experience. (Analyze)**
- Align workforce access and engagement efforts with the organization's strategic priorities. *(Apply)*
- Guide teams in implementing practices that strengthen workplace culture and employee experience. *(Apply)*
- Audit policies, practices, and systems to identify disparities in access or outcomes. *(Analyze)*
- Involve employees in the development of programs and practices that address workforce needs. *(Apply)*

**EM.4: Develop relationships to enhance services provided to students, employees, and the community. (Apply)**
- Establish a strategic communication framework to connect with internal and external stakeholders. *(Apply)*
- Cultivate cross-department or external partnerships that expand opportunities, resources, and services for students and employees. *(Apply)*
- Model leadership behaviors that promote respect, trust, and meaningful engagement across varied stakeholder groups. *(Apply)*

For more information
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